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Worth While Poems

Selected by

Homer A. Rodeheaver

Worth While Poems

WAIF GEMS OF VERSE GATHERED FROM HERE AND THERE AND RECITED IN PUBLIC READINGS BY

HOMER A. RODEHEAVER

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During the years I have been in evangelistic work, it has been my custom, in connection with the song and other services to recite poems which I thought would be helpful. Some have told me that these little verses led them to Christ; others that the dark corners had been brightened, the clouds of doubt dispelled and new hope born through their agency.

Good friends all over the country have very kindly sent to me clippings of this nature without giving the names of the authors; therefore, if I have failed in any instance to give credit where it was due, or inadvertently infringed upon the rights of others, I have not done so intentionally.

For the many friends who have been helped by these literary waifs and have asked for them, I have printed this little book. All who enjoy them owe thanks and appreciation to my good friends, Strickland Gillilan; The Forbes Company; Ella Wheeler Wilcox; The Conkey Company, and others, for so graciously allowing me to re-print from some of their splendid copyrighted publications.

Sincerely,

Homer A. Rodeheaver.

Contents

A Letter to Mother 10
A Little Prayer 37
A Pretty Good Plan to Forget It 24
A Smile 26
A Smiling Paradox 63
As To You 28

Being a Man 52
Blemishes 48

Do Something 53

Everybody Is Lonesome 22

Finest of All 42

Friendship 41

Homely Rhymes 61

If 16
If We Knew 51
In Concluding 64
It Can Be Done 56

Just Keep On 30

Keep A-Goin' 50

Me an' Pap an' Mother 32

Old Mothers 59

Sawdust From the Trail 57
Sing a Song 31
Smile 36
Smile 54

That Little Chap o' Mine 45
The Anvil of God's Word 49
The Best Letter 18
The Coat of Life 43
The Contagious Smile 55
The Finest Sight 38
The Mother's Love 58
The Old Hymns 14
The Washerwoman's Song 46
Today 40
To My Mother 60
To My Son 62
Try Smiling 63

"What Christ Said" 35
What Might Have Been 20
Where The Lord Is 60
Worth While 9

WORTH WHILE

It is easy enough to be pleasant,
When life flows by like a song,
But the man worth while is one who will smile,
When everything goes dead wrong.
For the test of the heart is trouble,
And it always comes with the years;
And the smile that is worth the praises of earth,
Is the smile that shines through tears.

It is easy enough to be prudent
When nothing tempts you to stray,
When without or within no voice of sin
Is luring your soul away;
But it's only a negative virtue
Until it is tried by fire,
And the life that is worth the honor on earth,
Is the one that resists desire.

By the cynic, the sad, the fallen,
Who had no strength for the strife,
The world's highway is cumbered today,
They make up the sum of life.
But the virtue that conquers passion,
And the sorrow that hides in a smile,
It is these that are worth the homage on earth,
For we find them but once in a while.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

A LETTER TO MOTHER—AFTER HEARING "BILL"

Dear Mother—I went up last night
An' heard Bill preach—an', say
You oughta hear that feller talk,
An' teach an' shout an' pray,
An' go a chasin' up and down
That big high platform there,
As tho' he'd tear the blame thing up
And wave it in the air,
If it would make the truth strike home.
An' mother, dear, I swan,
In all my forty years, I've never
Seen such goin's on.
Why! first he'd be laffin'
Jist almost fit to kill,
An' then he'd be a weepin', while
Ten thousand folks kep' still
An' helt their breath, and wiped their eyes,
An' leant way over,—so
They wouldn't miss not nary a word
That thundered to and fro
All thro' the Tabernacle,
A reachin' every heart

[This poem was written by Mrs. Terradell especially for the "Mothers' Day" in Columbus, Ohio.]

An' touchin' it an' meltin' it
An' makin' sinners smart.
Whenever he would "hit the ball,"
An' when the right time cum,
Hundreds and hundreds, 'peared to me,
Would make a straight home run
A hittin' the ol' sawdust trail
An' graspin' Bill's hand tight.
An' ev'rybody's sorry when he quits
And ses "Goodnight"
As only Bill can say it,
With that ever changin' voice;
Some folks might not like it,
But it makes my heart rejoice.
Why, mother, when I get to heaven
An' God lets go my hand,
An' I've kist you, I know I'll hear,
Above the angel band,
That voice of Bill's I've learnt to love,
A shoutin', "Glory Be,"
An' "Halleluyer," which from Bill
Sounds awful good to me.

An' Mother, some time purty soon
(Best thing I've heard Bill say)
He's gonna git the mothers out
An' have a "Mothers' Day,"

An' speak of them, and talk to them
Like he allus does, so fine;
Among that crowd of mothers there
I wisht I could see mine,
With her sweet ol' face an' her snow-white hair,
An' the smile,
An' the love, an' the cheer—
With her hand in mine, so trustin' like.
Oh, I wisht that you wus here!

I'd take you 'way up front, so you
Could hear Bill talk, and see
All the white ribbons an' the white flowers
That folks'll wear, an' be
Jist the dearest, sweetest mother,
An' the purtiest, too, I know,
Of all the many mothers
In this here town to go.
But, Mother, sence you can't be here
Cause you're so fur away,
I went an' I got a little flower
To send to you today.
An' oh, I looked all over town
To find one that would do;
I wanted one so perfect like,
Remindin' me of you.

So here it is, my mother,
A rose, all pure an' white—
In full bloom, like your soul is,
An' a shinin' with all the might
God gave it; an' a givin' out
To others the very best
That's in it; just for all
The world like you do—
I can't write the rest
That's in my heart and soul an' mind,
Because—I don't know why—
But I feel all sorter choked up,
Like when you can't help but cry.
But before I end this letter
And the train takes it away
To the dearest mother in the world,
I just want to say,
A hearin' Bill, has even made me
Love you more, by gum!
With lots of love an' kisses,
I am, your unworthy son.

Mrs. D. A. Terradell

THE OLD HYMNS

There's lots of music in 'em—
The hymns of long ago,
And when some gray-haired brother
Sings the ones I used to know
I sorter want to take a hand;
I think of days gone by—
"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand
And cast a wistful eye!"

There's lots of music in 'em—
Those dear, sweet hymns of old,
With visions bright of lands of light,
And shining streets of gold;
And I hear 'em ringing—singing,
Where mem'ry, dreaming, stands—
"From Greenland's icy mountains
To India's coral strands."

They seem to sing forever
Of holier, sweeter days,
When the lilies of the love of God
Bloomed white in all the ways;
And I want to hear their music
From the old-time meetin' rise.
Till "I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies."

We never needed singin' books
In them old days—we knew
The words, the tunes of every one—
The dear old hymn book through.
We didn't have no trumpets then,
No organs built for show,
We only sang to praise the Lord
"From whom all blessings flow."

An' so I love the old hymns,
And when my time shall come—
Before my light has left me,
And my singing lips are dumb—
If I can hear 'em sing them then
I'll pass without a sigh
To "Canaan's fair and happy land
Where my possessions lie."

Atlanta Constitution

IF

If you can keep your head when all about you
  Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
  But make allowance for their doubting, too:
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
  Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
  And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
  If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
  And treat those two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truths you've spoken
  Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,
  And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch and toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will, which says to them: "Hold on;"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son.

Rudyard Kipling

THE BEST LETTER

You may write a thousand letters
To the maiden you adore,
And declare in every letter
That you love her more and more;
You may praise her grace and beauty
In a thousand glowing lines,
And compare her eyes of azure
With the brightest star that shines.
If you had the pen of Byron
You would use it every day
In composing written worship
To your sweetheart far away;
But the letter far more welcome
To an older, gentler breast,
Is the letter to your mother
From the boy she loves the best.

Youthful blood is fierce and flaming,
And when writing to your love
You will rave about your passion,
Swearing by the stars above;
Vowing by the moon's white splendor
That the girlie you adore
Is the one you'll ever cherish
As no maid was loved before.

Read by Mr. Rodeheaver in one of the Sunday Meetings. Written by Mr. Kirk for this special occasion.

You will pen full many a promise
On the paper white and dumb
That you never can live up to
In the married years to come.
But a much more precious letter,
Bringing more and deeper bliss
Is the letter to your mother
From the boy she cannot kiss.

She will read it very often
When the lights are soft and low,
Sitting in the same old corner
Where she held you years ago,
And, regardless of its diction,
Its construction, or its style,
And although its spelling would
Provoke a critic's smile,
In her old and trembling fingers
It becomes a work of art,
Stained by tears of joy and sadness
As she hugs it to her heart;
Yes, the letter of all letters,
Look wherever you may roam,
Is the letter to your mother
From the boy away from home.

W. F. Kirk

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

It isn't the thing you do, dear,
It's the thing you leave undone—
That gives you a bit of a heartache
At the setting of the sun.
The tender word forgotten;
The letter you did not write;
The flower you did not send, dear,
Are your haunting ghosts at night.

The stone you might have lifted
Out of a brother's way;
The bit of heartsome counsel
You were hurried too much to say;
The loving touch of the hand, dear,
And the gentle, winning tone
That you had no time or thought for,
With troubles enough of your own.

Those little acts of kindness,
So easily out of mind,
Those chances to be angels
Which we poor mortals find,
They come in night and silence,
Each sad, reproachful wrath,
When hope is faint and flagging
And a chill has fallen on faith.

For life is all too short, dear,
And sorrow is all too great
To suffer our slow compassion
That tarries until too late;
And it isn't the thing you do, dear,
It's the thing you leave undone
That gives you a bit of a heartache,
At the setting of the sun.

EVERYBODY IS LONESOME

Way down deep within their hearts
Everybody's lonesome;
Far within their secret parts
Everybody's lonesome.
Makes no difference how they smile,
How they live or what their style;
Once in every little while
Everybody's lonesome.

People first in big affairs—
Even they are lonesome.
Maybe like to put on airs;
Just the same, they're lonesome.
Men for whom existence blends
Every good; who gain all ends,
Still reach out their hands for friends;
Everybody's lonesome.

Women, silk-clad, jeweled fine,
Yes, they, too, are lonesome;
When their gems the brightest shine.
They are just as lonesome.
Some must serve and some command,
All still seek, with groping hand,
Love, and friends who understand.
Everybody's lonesome.

Though your gift of friendship's small
  Everybody's lonesome.
It may answer someone's call;
  Someone who is lonesome.
Give, and give with might and main;
Give your hands, and join the chain,
And your gift will be your gain
  Some time, when you're lonesome.

Detroit News

A PRETTY GOOD PLAN TO FORGET IT

If you see a tall fellow ahead of the crowd,
A leader of men, marching fearless and proud,
And you know of a tale whose mere telling aloud
Would cause his proud head to in anguish be bowed,
It's a pretty good plan to forget it.

If you know of a skeleton hidden away
In a closet, and guarded and kept from the day
In the dark, whose showing, whose sudden display
Would cause grief and sorrow and life-long dismay,
It's a pretty good plan to forget it.

If you know of a spot in the life of a friend,
(We all have such spots concealed, world without end),
Whose touching his heartstrings would play on and rend
Till the shame of its showing no grieving could mend,
It's a pretty good plan to forget it.

If you know anything that will darken the joy
Of a man or a woman, a girl or a boy,
That will wipe out a smile or the least way
annoy
A fellow, or cause any gladness to cloy,
It's a pretty good plan to forget it.

If you know of a thing, just the least little sin,
Whose telling would cork up a laugh or a grin
Of a man you don't like, for Lord's sake keep
it in!
Don't, don't be a knocker, right here stick a
pin—
It's a pretty good plan to forget it.

A SMILE

The thing that goes the farthest
Toward making life worth while,
That costs the least and does the most,
Is just a pleasant smile;
The smile that bubbles from a heart
That loves its fellowmen,
Will drive away the cloud of gloom
And coax the sun again.
It's full of worth and goodness, too,
With manly kindness blent—
It's worth a million dollars
And it doesn't cost a cent.

There is no room for sadness
When we see a cheery smile;
It always has the same good look—
It's never out of style—
It nerves us on to try again
When failure makes us blue;
The dimples of encouragement
Are good for me and you.
It pays a higher interest,
For it is merely lent—
It's worth a million dollars,
And it doesn't cost a cent.

A smile comes very easy—
You can wrinkle up with cheer
A hundred times before you
Can squeeze out a soggy tear.
It ripples out moreover
To the heartstrings that will tug,
And always leaves an echo
That is very like a hug.
So smile away. Folks understand
What by a smile is meant,
It's worth a million dollars,
And it doesn't cost a cent.

AS TO YOU

Did you give him a lift? He's a brother of man, and bearing about all the burden he can.

Did you give him a smile? He was downcast and blue, and a smile would have helped him to battle it through.

Did you give him your hand? He was slipping down hill, and the world, so I fancied, was using him ill.

Did you give him a word, did you show him the road, or did you just let him go on with his load?

Did you help him along? He's a sinner like you, but the grasp of your hand might have carried him through.

Did you bid him good cheer? Just a word and a smile were what he most needed that last weary mile. Do you know what he bore, in that burden of cares that is every man's load and that sympathy shares?

Did you try to find out what he needed from you, or did you just leave him to battle it through? Do you know what it means to be losing the fight, when a lift just in time might set everything right?

Do you know what it means—just the clasp of a hand, when a man's borne about all a man ought to stand?

Did you ask what it was—why the quivering lip, and the glistening tears down the pale cheeks that slip? Were you a brother of his when time came to be? Did you offer to help him, or didn't you see?

Did you stop when he asked you to give him a lift, or were you so busy you left him to shift? Oh, I know what you say may be true, but the test of your manhood is what did you do? Did you reach out your hand? Did you find him the road, or did you just let him go by with his load?—F. B. Cawell, From Advocate and Guardian.

JUST KEEP ON

Just keep on a-livin'
An' keep on a-givin',
An' keep on a-tryin' to smile;
Just keep on a-singin'
A-trustin' an' a-clingin'
To the promise of an afterwhile.
For the sun comes up
An' the sun goes down,
An' the morning follows night.
There's a place to rest
Like a mother's breast,
An' a time when things come right.

Just keep on believin'
An' a-hidin' all your grievin',
An' keep on a-tryin' to cheer.
Just keep on a-prayin'
A-lovin' an' a-sayin'
The things that we love to hear.
For the tide comes in
An' the tide goes out,
An' the dark will all turn bright;
There's a rest from the load
An' an end to the road,
An' a place where things come right.

Clifton Abbott

SING A SONG

If you'll sing a song as you go along,
In the face of a real or a fancied wrong;
If, in spite of the doubt, you will fight it out
And show a heart that is brave and stout;
If you'll laugh at the jeers and refuse the tears,
You'll force the ever reluctant cheers
That the world denies when a coward cries
And gives to the man who bravely tries,—
And you'll win success with a little song,
If you'll sing the song as you go along.

If you'll sing a song as you go along,
You'll find that the singing will make you
strong.
And the heavy load and the rugged road,
And the sting and the strife of the torturous
goad
Will soar with the note that you set afloat,
That the beam will change to a trifling moat,—
That the world is sad when you are sad,
And bright and beautiful when you are glad;
And that all you need is a little song,
If you'll sing the song as you trudge along.

ME AN' PAP AN' MOTHER

When I was a little tike
I set at th' table
'Tween my mother an' my pap;
Eat all I was able.
Pap he fed me on one side,
Mammy on th' other,
Tell ye we was chums, them days—
Me an' pap an' mother.

Sundays, we'd take great, long walks
Through th' woods an' pasters;
Pap he al'ays packed a cane,
Mother'n me picked asters.
Sometimes they's a sister 'long,
Sometimes they's a brother;
But they al'ays was us three—
Me an' pap an' mother.

Pap he didn't gabble much;
Hel' his head down, thinkin'.
Didn't seem t' hear us talk,
Nor th' cow-bells clinkin'.
Love-streaks all 'peared worried out
'Bout one thing er nuther;
Didn't al'ays understand pap—
That's me an' mother.

I got big an' went away;
Left th' farm behind me.
Thinkin' o' that partin' yit
Seems t' choke an' blind me.
'Course I'd be all safe an' good
With m' married brother,
But we had to part, us three—
Me an' pap an' mother.

Hurried back, one day; found pap
Changed, an' pale an' holler;
Seen right off he'd have to' go—
Where we couldn't foller.
Lovin' streaks all showed up then—
Ah, we loved each other!
Talked fast, jest t' keep back tears—
Me an' pap an' mother.

Pap he's—dead; but mother ain't;
Soon will be, I reckon;
Claims already she can see
Pap's forefinger beckon.
Life hain't long, I'll go myself
One these days eruther.
Then we'll have good times agin,
Me an' pap an' mother.

Purtier hills we'll have t' climb,
Saunterin' 'long old fashion,
Hear th' wild birds singin' 'round;
See th' river splashin'—
If God'd only let us three
Be 'lone, like we'd ruther,
Heaven'd be a great ol' place
For me an' pap an' mother.

Strickland W. Gillilan.

This is indeed a classic among our modern literature. It has helped a lot of folks and made them anxious to prepare for that re-union to which we are all looking forward.

"WHAT CHRIST SAID"

I said, "Let me walk in the fields."
He said, "No! Walk in the town."
I said, "There are no flowers there."
He said, "No flowers, but a crown."

I said, "But the skies are black;
There's nothing but noise and din."
And He wept as He sent me back;
"There is more," He said, "there is sin."

I said, "I shall miss the light,
And friends will miss me, they say."
He answered, "Choose tonight,
If I am to miss you, or they."

I pleaded for time to be given,
He said, "Is it hard to decide?
It will not seem hard in Heaven
To have followed the steps of your Guide."

Then into His hand went mine,
And into my heart came He;
And I walk in a light divine—
The path that I feared to see.

George McDonald.

SMILE

Smile, and the world smiles with you,
"Knock" and you go alone;
For the cheerful grin
Will let you in
Where the kicker is never known.

Growl, and the way looks dreary;
Laugh, and the path is bright,
For the welcome smile
Brings sunshine, while
A frown shuts out the light.

Sing, and the world's harmonious!
Grumble, and things go wrong,
Yet all the time
You are out of rhyme
With the busy, bustling throng.

Kick, and there's trouble brewing;
Whistle, and life is gay,
And the world's in tune
Like a day in June,
And sorrow will melt away.

A LITTLE PRAYER

If any little word of mine
  May make a life the brighter;
If any little song of mine
  May make a heart the lighter,
God help me speak the little word,
  And take my bit of singing,
And drop it in some lonely vale
  To set the echoes ringing.

If any little love of mine
  May make a life the sweeter;
If any little care of mine
  May make a friend's the fleeter;
If any little lift may ease
  The burden of another,
God give me love, and care and strength
  To help my toiling brother.

This world we're livin' in
Is mighty hard to beat;
We get a thorn with every rose—
But ain't the roses sweet!

THE FINEST SIGHT

'Twas on a well-filled railway train one snowy
winter day,
When each was sitting waiting for his sta-
tion;
The most of us were speeding on to spend
sometime away
From home, with friends or sweethearts or
relation.
A sweet, old white-haired lady sat three seats
in front of me—
A gray-haired man beside her called her
"Mother";
And there I sat and wondered if a finer sight
could be
Than two old gray-haired folks that love
each other.

The love of youth for youth is strong and
thrills folks through and through;
The love of middle age is sweet and deeper;
The love of our decrepitude is as the compass
true,
Each praying to be first to meet the Reaper.

I've seen the dawn sweep o'er the sea and gild the distant hill
I've seen the best the world affords, my brother;
But nothing else with helpful tears these hardened eyelids fill
Like two old gray-haired folks that love each other.

When down the western slope we go—my chum and I, together;
When she a crown of silvery white is wearing,
May she, close-clinging to my hand, ne'er stop to wonder whether
The old-time love for her I still am bearing.
God grant—He's granted lots of things that gladdened her and me—
My faded lips with kisses she may smother;
That when we've lost the fire of youth we twain may come to be
Two gentle, gray-haired folks that love each other.

TODAY

Sure this world is full of trouble,
I ain't said it ain't.
Lord! I've had enough, and double
Reason for complaint.
Rain and storm have come to fret me,
Skies were often gray;
Thorns and brambles have beset me
On the road—but say,
Ain't it fine today?

What's the use of always weepin',
Makin' trouble last?
What's the use of always keepin'
Thinkin' of the past?
Each must have his tribulation,
Water with his wine;
Life, it ain't no celebration;
Trouble? I've had mine—
But today is fine.

It's today that I am livin',
Not a month ago,
Havin', losin', takin', givin',
As time wills it so.

Yesterday a cloud of sorrow
Fell across the way;
It may rain again tomorrow,
It may rain—but say,
Ain't it fine today?

Douglas Malloch,
American Lumberman Poet.

FRIENDSHIP

It is my joy in life to find
At every turning of the road,
The strong arms of a comrade kind,
To help me onward with my load;
And since I have no gold to give,
And love alone must make amends,
My only prayer is while I live,—
"God make me worthy of my friends."

FINEST OF ALL

God made the streams that gurgle down the
purple mountain-side;
He made the gorgeous coloring with which the
sunset's dyed;
He made the hills and covered them with
glory; and He made
The sparkle on the dew-drop and the shifting
shine and shade.
Then, seeing that He needed but a crown for
all earth's charms,
He made a little woman with a baby in her
arms.
He made the arching rainbow that is hurled
across the sky;
He made the blessed flowers that nod and
smile as we go by;
He made the ball-room beauty as she sways
with queenly grace,
But sweetest of them all He made the lovelight
in the face
That bends above a baby warding off all earth's
alarms—
God bless the little woman with a baby in her
arms.

Strickland W. Gillilan.

[In this poem notice how, in every single line, Mr. Gillilan suggests a beautiful picture. In any audience where the speaker would have to ask a mother to take the baby out, how cheerfully she would do so after hearing this little poem.]

THE COAT OF LIFE

From out the tangled threads of love and hate,
The gold of laughter and the grey of tears,
Fate weaves the cloth from which we all must cut
The coat of life to wear in later years.
Ours not to choose the color of the woof;
Ours not to grumble or to lightly praise;
Ours but to sew the cloth in proper shape,
To use time's needle and the thread of days.
We may embroider it with wondrous dreams,
Or stitch it with ambition's silvery skein;
Or we may dye it with our bitter tears,
Or make it loose to cover faults or pain.
But every day we must put in a stitch,
A goodly action or, perchance, a sin;
And neither tears nor prayers nor any shears can rip
Those daily stitches that we have put in.
And we must wear through all the years to come
The cloak we fashion from this cloth of fate;
So let us stitch it strong with faith and love
And goodly deeds before it is too late.

Betsy Trotwood.

DADDY

My friend, Roland A. Nichols, wrote this. Hear him in one of his charming lectures if granted the opportunity.

Jest the best thing, Daddy is,
When he ain't got rheumatiz.
Gives me pennies and good advice
'Bout keepin' clean and bein' nice,
And sayin' please, and don't deceive,
Han'kerchief instead of sleeve,
Seems jest like 'at Daddy knew
He was once a small boy, too,
Second table for him, I 'speck
When he only got the neck.
Anyhow he always says,
"Give the Kid the best there is."
An' when Ma sends me off to bed,
Daddy takes the light ahead
An' holds my hand, an' talks maybe
'Bout the things 'at used to be
When he an' Unky was little boys,
An' all about their games an' toys.
What am I goin' to be? Gee whiz,
Goin' to be like Daddy is;
Druther be like him, I jing
'An president, or anything.
He's like Ma says angels is
When he ain't got the rheumatiz.

Roland A. Nichols.

THAT LITTLE CHAP O' MINE

To feel his little hand in mine, so clinging and so warm,
To know he thinks me strong enough to keep him safe from harm;
To see his simple faith in all that I can say or do,
It sort o' shames a fellow, but it makes him better, too;
And I am trying hard to be the man he fancies me to be,
Because I have this chap at home who thinks the world o' me.
I would not disappoint his trust for anything on earth,
Nor let him know how little I just naturally am worth.
But after all, its easier, that brighter road to climb,
With the little hands behind me to push me all the time.
And I reckon I'm a better man than what I used to be
Because I have this chap at home who thinks the world o' me.

(Do not know who wrote this, but it has helped so many folks I like to pass it on. If you know who wrote it, tell me, so I can give proper credit. Men have told me they have been saved through this poem.)

THE WASHERWOMAN'S SONG

In a very humble cot,
In a rather quiet spot,
In the suds and in the soap,
Worked a woman full of hope;
Working, singing, all alone,
In a sort of undertone:
"With the Savior for a friend,
He will keep me to the end."

Sometimes happening along,
I had heard the semi-song,
And I often used to smile,
More in sympathy than guile;
But I never said a word
In regard to what I heard,
As she sang about her Friend
Who would keep her to the end.

* * *

It's a song I do not sing,
For I scarce believe a thing
Of the stories that are told
Of the miracles of old;
But I know that her belief
Is the anodyne of grief,
And will always be a friend
That will keep her to the end.

Just a trifle lonesome she,
Just as poor as poor could be;
But her spirits always rose,
Like the bubbles in the clothes,
And, tho' widowed, and alone,
Cheered her with the monotone
Of a Savior and a Friend
Who would keep her to the end.

I have seen her rub and scrub,
On the washboard in the tub,
While the baby, sopped in suds,
Rolled and tumbled in the duds,
Or was paddling in the pools,
With old scissors stuck in spools;
She still humming of her Friend
Who would keep her to the end.

Human hopes and human creeds
Have their root in human needs;
And I should not wish to strip
From that washerwoman's lip
Any song that she can sing,
Any hope that songs can bring,
For the woman has a Friend
Who will keep her to the end.

Eugene F. Ware.

BLEMISHES

I saw her in the cloistered dimness where
We stranger twain a moment bowed in prayer.
Upon her cheek a glossy-blemished place
Made hideous an elsewise lovely face.
I pitied her, deep in my inmost soul,
That Fate on her had levied such a toll.
Then in new radiance the lights upsprang
And with relief my spirit leaped and sang.
The scar that lashed my sympathy like whips
A red rose was, its stem between her lips!

Oft in the darkness of our clouded ken
We note shortcomings in our fellowmen:
Soul-blemishes and mind-disfigurements,
Faults past denial, traits that give offense.
We pity or we blame, inquirying: "Why
Must others so less perfect be than I?"
Then comes the clearer light of graver years—
Virtues enlarged, sins shrunken, through our tears—
Till that which seemed a fault in blinder days
Shines out a glory and compels our praise!

Strickland W. Gillilan.

THE ANVIL OF GOD'S WORD

I stood one day beside a blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then, looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had?" said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," he said, then said with twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so methought the anvil of God's word,
For ages skeptics' blows have beat upon,
And though the noise of falling blow was heard,
The anvil is unharmed, the hammers gone.

When all the world is out of plumb
And business is on the bum,
A two-cent grin and a lifted chin
Helps some, my boy, helps some.

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KEEP A-GOIN'

If you strike a thorn or a rose,
Keep a-goin'!
If it hails or if it snows,
Keep a-goin'!
'Taint no use to sit and whine
When the fish ain't on your line;
Bait your hook and keep on tryin'
Keep a-goin'!

When the weather kills your crop,
Keep a-goin'!
When you tumble from the top,
Keep a-goin'!
S'pose you are out of every dime,
Gettin' broke ain't any crime;
Tell the world you're feelin' prime—
Keep a-goin'!

When it looks like all is up,
Keep a-goin'!
Drain the sweetness from the cup,
Keep a-goin'!
See the wild birds on the wing!
Hear the bells that sweetly ring!
When you feel like sighin'—sing!
Keep a-goin'!

Frank L. Stanton.

IF WE KNEW

Could we but draw back the curtains
That surround each other's lives,
See the naked heart and spirit,
Know what spur the action gives,
Often we would find it better,
Purer than we judge we should;
We should love each other better
If we only understood.

Could we judge all deeds by motives,
See the good and bad within,
Often we should love the sinner,
All the while we loathe the sin.
Could we know the powers working
To o'erthrow integrity,
We should judge each other's errors
With more patient charity.

Ah! We judge each other harshly,
Knowing not life's hidden force;
Knowing not the fount of action
Is less turbid at its source.
Seeing not amid the evil
All the golden grains of good;
Oh, we'd love each other better
If we only understood.

BEING A MAN

Whilst walking down a crowded
City street the other day,
I heard a little urchin
To a comrade turn and say,
"Say, Chimmey, lemme tell youse,
I'd be happy as a clam
If I only was de feller dat
Me mudder t'inks I am.

She t'inks I am a wonder,
An' she knows her little lad
Could never mix wit' nuttin'
Dat was ugly, mean or bad.
Oh, lot o'times I sit and t'ink
How nice, 'twould be, gee whiz!
If a feller wus de feller
Dat his mudder t'inks he is."

My friend, be yours a life of toil
Or undiluted joy,
You still can learn a lesson
From this small, unlettered boy.
Don't aim to be an earthly saint
With eyes fixed on a star,
Just try to be the fellow that
Your mother thinks you are.

DO SOMETHING

Are you almost disgusted
With life, little man?
I will tell you a wonderful trick
That will bring you contentment
If anything can,—
Do something for somebody, quick.

Are you awfully tired
With play, little girl,
Weary, discouraged, and sick?
I'll tell you the loveliest game in the world,—
Do something for somebody, quick.

Though it rains like the rain
Of the flood, little man,
And the clouds are forbidding and thick,
You can make the sun shine in your soul, little man—
Do something for somebody, quick.

Though the skies are like brass
Overhead, little girl,
And the walks like a well-heated brick,
And your earthly affairs in a terrible whirl—
Do something for somebody, quick.

SMILE

Like bread without the spreadin',
  Like a puddin' without sauce,
Like a mattress without beddin',
  Like a cart without a hoss,
Like a door without a latchstring,
  Like a fence without a stile,
Like a dry an' barren creek bed,
  Is a face without a smile!

Like a house without a dooryard,
  Like a yard without a flower,
Like a clock without a mainspring,
  That will never tell the hour;
A thing that sort o' makes yo' feel
  A hunger all the while—
Oh, the saddest sight that ever was
  Is a face without a smile!

The face of man was built fer smiles,
  An' thereby he is blest
Above the critters of the field,
  The birds an' all the rest;
He's just a little lower
  Than the angels in the skies,
An' the reason is that he can smile;
  Therein his glory lies!

So smile an' don't fergit to smile,
An' smile, an' smile ag'in;
'Twill help loosen up the cords o' care
An' ease the weight o' sin;
'Twill help yo' on the longest road,
An' cheer yo' mile by mile;
An' so, whatever is your lot,
Jes' smile, an' smile, an' smile!

National Magazine.

THE CONTAGIOUS SMILE

Smile a smile!
While you smile,
Another smiles;
And soon there are miles
And miles of smiles
And life's worth while—
If you but smile.

IT CAN BE DONE

Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
But he, with a chuckle, replied,
That "Maybe it couldn't" but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in, with a trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried, he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing,
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that—
At least no one ever has done it."
But he took off his coat, and he took off his hat,
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With the lift of his chin, and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands that prophesy failure,
There are thousands to point out to you, one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you;
But just buckle in, with a bit of a grin,
Then take off your coat and go to it;
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing,
That "cannot be done," and you'll do it.

SAWDUST FROM THE TRAIL

When you see a fellow coming
And he's got a level head;
And the package he is carrying
Contains a loaf of bread;
And the bucket he is toting,
Filled with milk instead of booze,
If you look a little closer,
You'll see sawdust on his shoes.

If you hear a fellow whistle,
And the tune is light and gay;
As he hands his wife the billet,
That contains his weekly pay
With not a penny missing,
Gone to square a score for booze,
You can bet your bottom dollar
He has sawdust on his shoes.

If you see a merry urchin
Playing marbles on the street,
And his little knickerbockers
Have no patches on the seat;
If his shooter-bag is bursting
With new alleys, reds and blues,
You can gamble that his daddy
Has had sawdust on his shoes.

THE MOTHER'S LOVE

Over the forest and treeless plains
And over the heights above,
'Tis ever the same, the heart of the home
Is the throb of the mother's love.
It kneels by the bed of the drowsy head
And whispers a lullaby
That softly streams through the baby's dreams,
"Fear not, for Mother's nigh";

It flows from her lips to her finger tips,
Caressing the baby's curls;
It shines in her eyes that sympathize
With the tears of her little girls;
The sorrows and joys of her little boys,
It only can understand,
And it hallows the touch we love so much,—
The pressure of mother's hand.

It mends the ball and the broken doll;
It finds the missing knife,
And all day long it weaves a song
'Round the wearisome tasks of life.
When the tear drops start and she lays her heart
On the breast of the pulseless one,

It looks above to the God of Love
And sighs, "Thy will be done."
On every sea and on every land
Beneath the sky's blue dome,
The mother's love is the life and the light
And the throbbing heart of the home.

OLD MOTHERS

I love old mothers—mothers with white hair
And kindly eyes, and lips grown softly sweet
With murmured blessings over sleeping babes.
There is a something in their quiet grace
That speaks the calm of Sabbath afternoons;
A knowledge in their deep, unfaltering eyes
That far outreaches all philosophy.
Time, with caressing touch, about them weaves
The silver-threaded fairy shawl of age,
While all the echoes of forgotten songs
Seem joined to lend a sweetness to their speech.
Old mothers! As they pass with slow-timed strength.
Sweet mothers! As they pass, one sees again
Old garden walks, old roses and old loves.

Charles S. Ross.

WHERE THE LORD IS

The Parish Priest of austerity,
Climbed in a high church steeple
To be nearer God,—
So that he might send His word down on the people.

In sermon script he daily wrote
What he thought was sent from Heaven;
And passed it down on the people's heads
Two times, one day in seven.

In his old age, God said, "Come down and die,"
And he cried from out the steeple,
"Where art Thou, Lord?" and the Lord replied
"Down here among the people."

TO MY MOTHER

Most of all the other beautiful things in life come by twos and threes, by dozens and hundreds; plenty of roses, stars, sunsets, rainbows, brothers and sisters, aunts and cousins, but only one mother in all the wide world.

Kate Douglas Wiggin

HOMELY RHYMES

If you've ever been heartsick and weary,
Half ready to give up the fight;
If you ever have thought of the lov'd ones
You've banished long years from your sight.
If you ever have crept to your cabin,
Half hid from the world, so it seems,
And sit there alone in the darkness
Then you know what the word "mother"
means.
For a boy's best friend is his mother—
And you're always a boy in her sight—
Don't forget all the good that she taught you—
Better meet her in prayer-land tonight.

Bob Owens

I jest heard that Elder Gray
Give his money all away;
Been a miser, clost and hard
Sence the big tree in our yard
Wuz a saplin';—never went
Nigh a soul ner give a cent.
Heer'd last night he'd give his wife
All he'd saved up all his life.
Sounds onreal,—but 'taint no lie—
I jest seen the hearse go by.

IN CONCLUDING---

I am thankful, truly thankful
For kind and loving friends,
Who wait with willing heart and hands
To help me gain my ends.
The faith which they repose in me
Is strength, through thick and thin;
I must not disappoint them,
So I feel I'm bound to win.

But then I must be truthful,
So I frankly here confess,—
There is another, stronger force,
Impels me toward success.
A doubting few have said I'd fail,
And so I feel I must,—
To make them swallow their remarks,
Confound 'em,—win or bust.

The world can't see your dreams, pard,
Can't see them soar and mount;
They're big things to you, and it may seem hard,
But just what you do will count.

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